

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
MANHATTAN, KANSAS 66506—3403

FOOD SAFETY NEWS



# Food Safety

NEWS

Food Safety CURRENT NEWS

## Fit® or Water? How Safe Are Your Fresh Foods?

This summer, Proctor & Gamble (P&G) introduced a new produce wash called Fit® Fruit and Vegetable Wash. This product is designed to remove unwanted residues such as soil, wax, and pesticides on fresh fruits and vegetables better than plain water. It is made from ingredients such as baking soda, grapefruit oil and citric acid. Questions have risen as to the effectiveness of this product compared to plain water.

Produce should be rinsed well before consumption to remove soil, traces or residues of chemicals and other contaminants from handling. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) allows certain levels of pesticide residues for adults, but these levels may affect children differently. Pesticides are used on produce to protect them from pests, weeds, mold, and bacteria. Some produce is coated with a food-grade wax to protect the product from drying out and to make it more

visually appealing. This wax is not harmful, but the produce must still be washed.

At this time, none of the produce washes are registered with the EPA to prove they are not risky to humans, nor do they claim they control, remove, or reduce pathogenic organisms. Since they claim to remove dirt, wax, or chemical residues only, they do not have to be registered with the EPA. By the end of 2000, efficacy testing will be conducted to show these rinses are better than using water or chlorine rinses.

Research was conducted by the University of Georgia and the University of California-Davis on a prototype home-use Fit product with the support of P&G. But, it was NOT the exact formula currently sold in stores. In this research, tomatoes were inoculated with *Salmonella*. The tomatoes were then sprayed with Fit®, rubbed briefly, rinsed, and evalu-

ated for residual *Salmonella*. The same process was repeated with water instead of Fit®. Results showed that Fit® consistently reduced bacteria populations 2 to 4 logs compared with water alone. The same tests were repeated in two certified laboratories with similar results. Tests were also conducted using apples and results were similar.

The cost of Fit® may discourage shoppers from trying it. The average retail price for an 8.5 oz. spray bottle is \$4.99. A 32 oz soak/refill bottle is \$5.99. This costs a family of four \$.37 per meal. Until complete results are published, the EPA recommends using common-sense practices such as proper hand washing, avoiding cross-contamination, and washing produce with a brush and water. *Additional Sources: The American Dietetic Association Nutrition Fact Sheet: Fruits and Vegetables: Wash them up!* [www.tryfit.com](http://www.tryfit.com) <http://www.cce.cornell.edu/food/fsarchives/030400/veggiewash.html>

### On the World Wide

#### Cleaning Produce

<http://www.tryfit.com/>

<http://www.cce.cornell.edu/food/fsarchives/030400/veggiewash.html>

<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/washing.htm>

#### Food Additives

[http://www.preparedfoods.com/archives/2000/2000\\_05/0005foodsafety.htm](http://www.preparedfoods.com/archives/2000/2000_05/0005foodsafety.htm)

<http://ifinfo.health.org/brochure/food-add.htm>

<http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/opa-antg.html>

<http://www.cspinet.org/reports/chemcuisine.htm>

<http://www.cspinet.org/additives/>

#### General Food Safety

<http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/extrapidresponse/foodsafety.htm>

<http://www.fightbac.org/>

<http://www.fsis.usda.gov/OA/pubs/consumerpubs.htm#FACT>

<http://www.fda.gov/default.htm>

<http://www.usda.gov/>

<http://www.foodsafety.gov/>

### Upcoming Events

**Aug. 15-16, 2000**

Serving Safe Food  
Overland Park, KS

Contact: Nada Thoden  
913-764-6300

**Aug. 23 & 30, 2000**

Serving Safe Food  
Junction City, KS

Contact: Donna Martinson  
785-238-4161

**Aug. 24 & 31, 2000**

Serving Safe Food  
Parsons, KS

Contact: Jean Rowland  
316-784-5337

**Sept. 14-15, 2000**

Serving Safe Food  
Hays, KS

Contact: Carla Morrical-Frederking  
785-628-9430

**Sept. 25-26, 2000**

Serving Safe Food  
Pratt, KS

Contact: Jean Clarkson-Frisbie  
316-672-6121

**Oct. 16-17, 2000**

Serving Safe Food  
Wichita, KS

Contact: Teresa Lang  
316-722-7721

**Nov. 14-15, 2000**

Serving Safe Food  
Overland Park, KS

Contact: Nada Thoden  
913-764-6300

#### September 2000

Food Safety Education Month  
<http://www.foodsafetycouncil.org/>

#### For Meat and Food Processors

One Day Workshops on HACCP, GMP's and Sanitation

**August 24, 2000**  
Brookings, SD

Contact: Mark Murphy, KSU  
1-877-205-8345  
Jason Mann, UNL  
1-888-688-4346



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## FAQ's

### When iced tea served in restaurants looks cloudy, is it contaminated with bacteria?

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there has never been a confirmed foodborne illness outbreak associated with iced tea. Restaurants must monitor their tea brewing procedures, however, to maintain product quality. Lipton foodservice recommends dismantling, washing, and rinsing tea makers' spigots, hoses, O-ring gaskets and reservoirs with hot water and detergent, and sanitizing all parts with proper solutions (such as 75° F water and at least 50 ppm chlorine). This should be done daily. Spigots are the biggest culprits, so it is recommended to keep a second sanitized spigot on hand to trade out with the old one when it needs cleaning. For more information about tea and tea safety, call Lipton Foodservice at 1-800-884-4841.

### How safe is "sun tea"?

At home, iced tea steeped in the sun's rays or brewed with boiling water can also get cloudy. If making sun tea, use a clean jar, bring it inside after a few hours, remove tea bags and store in the refrigerator. After 2-3 days, discard any unused tea. Thoroughly wash and rinse the jar, lid and spigot (if there is one).



## Food Safety RESEARCH

### Thermy™ - It's Safe to Bite When the Temperature is Right!

This is the latest campaign by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to educate consumers and promote the use of a food thermometer when cooking meat, poultry, and egg products.

"Thermym™" is the new spokesperson for this campaign. Thermym™ will be seen in many retail stores and public announcements to promote thermometer use in the home.

Several grocery chains are working in cooperation with the USDA to facilitate this campaign. A small percentage of consumers use a thermometer when cooking in the home. The food

thermometer is not just for the Thanksgiving turkey. It should be used year-round. The cost of buying a food thermometer is minimal compared to the safety of food for consumers. Research conducted at Kansas State University showed that a ground beef patty might turn brown before it is cooked to a safe temperature to destroy potentially dangerous pathogens. That is why the "eyeball" method to see if meat is done is not safe anymore.

How can you promote Thermym™? There are many ways. Set up exhibits in shopping malls, grocery stores, community centers, local and state fairs. In cooking demonstrations, show how to properly use

thermometers. Place brochures in public areas such as libraries and senior centers. Day care centers and schools are at a high risk for foodborne illness. Supply brochures to give to parents. Work with school home economics and science teachers to include Thermym™ in their curriculums. Use the media to distribute this information to a larger audience.

For more information on Thermym™ and thermometer usage see the following resources:  
**USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline**  
 1-800-535-4555 or  
 mphotline.fsis@usda.gov  
**FSIS Website**  
[www.fsis.usda.gov/thermy](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/thermy)  
**USDA/FSIS Food Safety Education Staff** 202-720-7943  
 or [fsis.outreach@usda.gov](mailto:fsis.outreach@usda.gov)  
*Source: USDA Food Safety Inspection Service*



destroy potentially dangerous pathogens. That is why the "eyeball" method to see if meat is done is not safe anymore.

### It's Back To School Time!

What items are on your back to school shopping list? New clothes, notebooks, pencils, etc. What about lunch supplies for a safe lunch? The last thing you want to do is pack an unsafe lunch for your child. Here are some items for your shopping list to pack a safe lunch.

1. Freezer gel packs - These will keep the food cold until lunch but not past lunchtime. Discard leftovers at the end of the day.
2. Insulated lunch box - Be sure to use gel packs or other cold items like frozen juice boxes.
3. Brown paper or plastic lunch bags - These are OK but not as good as insulated lunch boxes. Use extra paper or plastic to add extra insulation.
4. Insulated bottle - This keeps hot foods hot. Preheat the bottle with boiling water, empty, and then fill with the hot food.
5. Shelf-stable foods - This includes fresh fruits and vegetables, cookies, crackers, peanut butter sandwiches, canned meat, shelf-stable cheese, packaged pudding, and canned fruit and juice.
6. Perishable food - Must be kept cold! Some foods can be frozen and will thaw in the lunch box by lunchtime.

If possible, keep the lunch box in the refrigerator. In preparation, always use clean hands, clean utensils, and clean preparation surfaces. Have a safe lunch!

Source: <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/oa/news/bkschool.htm>

## The Call for Clean Food Labels

The phones at food manufacturers are ringing. Who's calling? Consumers who want foods labeled "clean," meaning foods that contain no preservatives. This has prompted manufacturers to formulate minimally processed foods to remove added preservatives. Preservatives are used to reduce bacterial growth, improve shelf life or improve flavor and texture.

In some cases, spices may be used instead of "preservatives." Researchers at Kansas State University recently studied the effects of spices on *E. coli* O157:H7. Garlic, more than 1% by weight, was found to be very effective in reducing *E. coli* O157:H7 in meat prod-

ucts such as salami and ground beef. The presence of garlic in ground beef can add protection in the undercooking of meat. Other spices that had antimicrobial properties in ground beef included clove, sage and oregano. In previous studies at K-State, cinnamon had antimicrobial effects in pasteurized apple juice inoculated with *E. coli* O157:H7.

Research to replace the usual preservatives include using cultured whey as a natural mold inhibitor. Whey can be formulated into seasoning blends or sprayed directly on the finished product surface. This product would be ideal for jerky, sausage products, sauces, marinades, breads and other bakery products.

Other mold inhibitors being studied include corn syrup solids or cultured dextrose. Whey protein is also being studied as a film barrier to improve shelf-life and the quality of nuts and nut by-products. These films could reduce the use of multi-layer packaging and cut packaging costs.

Other studies include putting tighter controls on temperature abuse to keep foods at optimal temperature and adding fruit juices or purees to foods to increase acidity and help control spoilage organism growth. Techniques such as these can increase the number of foods bearing a "clean" label that consumers demand.

Source: *A Fresh Look at Food Safety, Prepared Foods, May 2000*

### Keep Your Produce Safe!

Some general tips on keeping your produce clean and safe:

1. Wash with water or a produce wash. Use a scrub brush and rinse well.
2. Discard outer leaves of leafy vegetables.
3. Scrub outside of melons with water or produce wash before cutting. Rinse well.
4. Some produce can be peeled, but this is not necessary.
5. Cut produce on a clean cutting board with a clean knife. Don't cross-contaminate!
6. Thaw meats on a separate tray or plate in the refrigerator to prevent meat juices from dripping into produce drawers.
7. Clean and sanitize the refrigerator produce drawer regularly.

Source: *The American Dietetic Association Nutrition Fact Sheet: Fruits and Vegetables: Wash them up!*

## How Safe is Your Kitchen?

A study was just completed by Utah State University on consumer food-handling practices at home. The study included a survey of the participants and then videotaping them cooking in their home kitchen. Here is a brief summary of the results:

1. Hand washing was inadequate, with only 34% using soap.
2. Cleaning food-contact surfaces was inadequate. Seventy percent attempted this step, but most attempts were inadequate.
3. Vegetable washing was inadequate.
4. Most subjects (76%), did not store meat on the bottom refrigerator shelf.
5. Nearly all subjects cross-contaminated their salad with raw meat or egg. Hands were the most common problem.
6. Use of cloth towels was common, which leads to cross-contamination.
7. Most meat was undercooked according to Fight BAC! recommendations. Attempts to check doneness were primarily with a knife or other utensil. Only 5% used a thermometer.
8. Most oven and refrigerator temperatures were inaccurate.
9. Leftovers were not stored properly by dividing into smaller portions. Consumption of these leftovers may not be for 7-10 days.
10. Most refrigerators were overcrowded leading to improper cooling.

Source: *Consumer Food-handling Knowledge and Behavior: A Summary* Anderson, JB; Shuster, TA; Gee, E; Hansen, K; Volk, A; Mendenhall, VT